

**Testimony**  
**House Bill 1259**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**January 20, 2021; 10:00 a.m.**  
**North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality**

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is David Glatt, Director of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The DEQ is responsible for implementing many of the environmental protection programs in the state. I am here today to provide neutral testimony on HB 1259.

As background, the DEQ, in cooperation with NDSU and 21 municipalities in the state, is conducting testing of wastewater for the sole purpose of identifying indicators of the COVID-19 virus. The DEQ acknowledges that the communities own and operate their respective wastewater collection and treatment systems. The research received prior approval from each wastewater system before implementation and is being performed in cooperation with each of the communities. The COVID study was initiated to determine if testing could provide advanced notice of increasing COVID cases in a community. Samples continue to be collected and analyzed in the short term.

We appreciate the effort this bill makes to differentiate this monitoring from other wastewater monitoring required under environmental law. We do not object to HB 1259 as long as it does not conflict with existing monitoring and operational requirements identified in existing state law and rule, such as the Clean Water Act or the Safe Drinking Water Act.

This concludes my testimony. I stand for any questions.